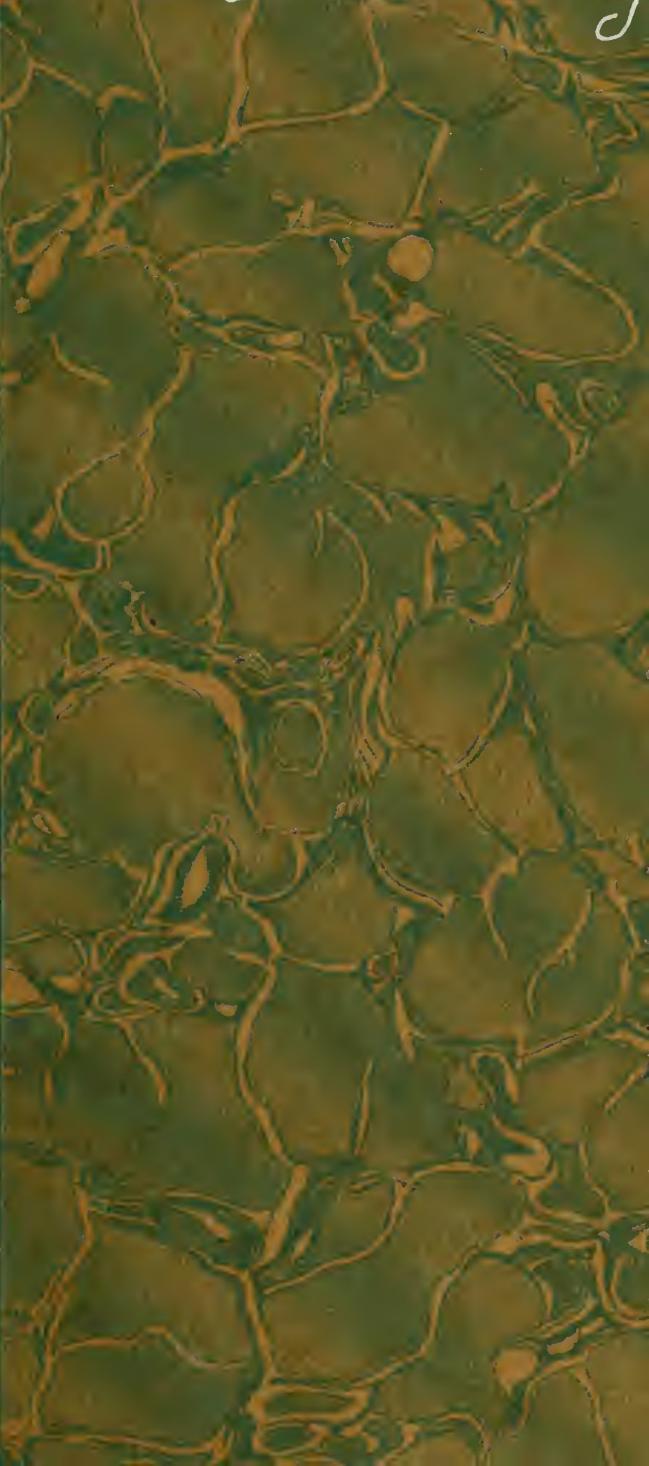


*Notes on Conduct
and Conducting*



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NOTES ON CONDUCTORS

AND

CONDUCTING

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ALSO THE ORGANISING
AND CONDUCTING OF
AMATEUR ORCHESTRAS

BY

T. R. CROGER, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S.

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NOTES ON CONDUCTORS
AND CONDUCTING.

By T. R. CROGER.



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THE ORGANISING AND CONDUCTING
OF AMATEUR ORCHESTRAS

BY

T. R. CROGER, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S.
Fellow of the Philharmonic Society

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XTH IMPRESSION

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PREFACE.

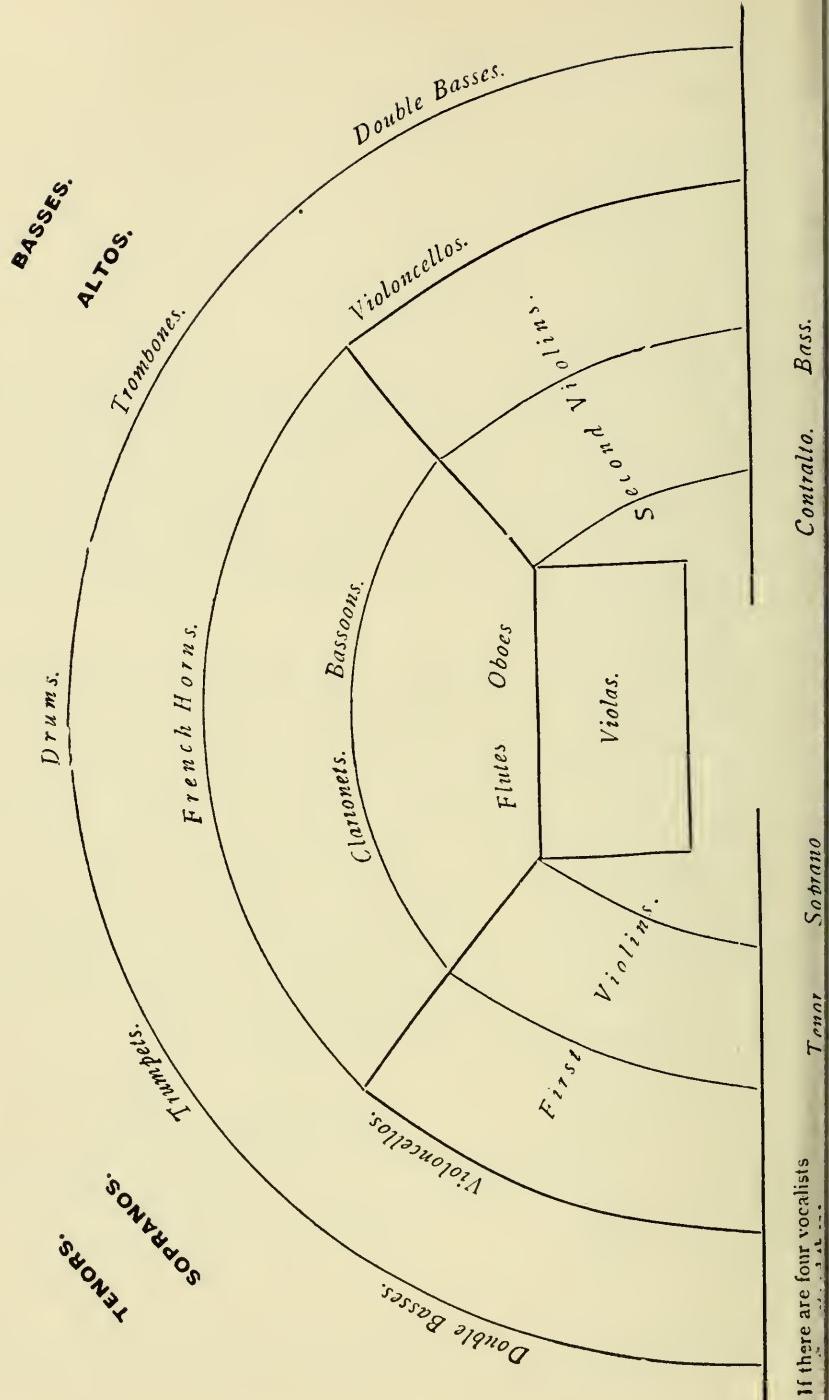
THE very generous notices, in the Musical Press, that followed the issue of the second edition of "Notes on Conductors and Conducting," and the fact of the second issue being disposed of, has encouraged me to add some additional matter to this the third impression.

In laying this before the musical enthusiasts, whose number is ever increasing, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I have nothing to suggest to conductors of established reputation, but address myself to those only who are seeking information on a technical subject. If one of these should find any help or satisfaction in the perusal of these pages, then I shall bear with equanimity the smiles of the ninety and nine who need no instruction.

T. R. C.

THE MODERN AND IMPROVED WAY OF ARRANGING AN ORCHESTRA.

CHORUS.



NOTES ON CONDUCTORS AND CONDUCTING.

ONE of the leading characteristics of our own time is the tendency to co-operate in many things that were formerly undertaken in a more personal or individual manner. Thus in the commercial world joint-stock undertakings are supplanting proprietary businesses, and in music there is a greater tendency to join numbers together for the study of the art; whereas in the Elizabethan age every gentleman was capable of taking part in a glee or concerted chamber music, now every musical person is expected to be competent to assist in a choir or play in an orchestra.

When Mendelssohn's "Elijah" was first performed in the year 1846, a professional chorus was engaged. Now every town, nay nearly every village, can boast

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of a choir of amateurs capable of performing the work !

Not only are there large choirs in every city (and several in many of them), but the scattered choirs of the Nonconformist churches all over the country have formed themselves into local unions, under the guidance of the Nonconformist Choir Union, having its headquarters in London, and giving an annual concert on a festival scale at the Crystal Palace. These choirs in their respective localities do a great deal of social as well as religious work, of great value.

The choirs of the Church of England have grouped themselves, in their respective diocesan jurisdictions, into festival choirs, to hold annual services in the cathedrals, and to help one another in their church work.

Great meetings of temperance societies, co-operative societies, and other bodies, are always graced by the presence of bands of singers and players upon musical instruments.

This is a statement of fact of great importance, but behind it lies another with which this paper is intended to deal, namely, that where there is a choir, be it that of a village chapel, a cathedral, an amateur band of two violins and a flute, or a full and admirable orchestra, there is always a conductor. There

must therefore be some thousands of aspiring musicians to whom a few suggestions may be useful. Up to the present time that necessary personage has been completely neglected by all our teaching institutions.

I understand that at the Tonic Sol-Fa College a class is formed in the summer term to study the "Art of Conducting," but much more work in that direction could be done.

Dr. Cummings has recently told me that he teaches conducting at the Guildhall School of Music.

Wagner wrote a book ("On Conducting"), and Berlioz a chapter in his splendid work on "Instrumentation." There is a book by Kling (in German). Carl Schroeder, of Hamburg (Augener and Co.), has issued a small book; but none of these seem to meet the need of the many conductors who would profit by instruction.*

Some years ago I had the pleasure of listening to a very lucid address given by Sir Joseph Barnby before the Choral Conductors' Alliance, a useful but short-lived body (Sir Alexander Mackenzie occupying the chair).

* Since this (the fourth) edition was put into the hands of the printer, I have seen notices in the press of a book on conducting by Herr Weingartner. I have not yet had the opportunity of reading it, but it should be helpful, coming as it does from so great an authority.

During the discussion that followed I took occasion to lament the fact that conducting was not taught, but left entirely to the intuition of the individual, to grope his way as he could. Sir Joseph Barnby agreed that it was so, and related that when he was conductor at the Royal Academy of Music, on one occasion he put a student, one who was a "born conductor," possessing the natural gifts needful, and since has become famous as a composer, to conduct one of his own compositions; he (Sir Joseph) was "taken to task" by Sir George Macfarren, the principal, and bidden "never to do such a thing again"!

The "Daily Mail" for March 30, 1900, has the following:

"NEGLECTED CONDUCTORS."

"It is curious how persistently the managers of our musical nurseries overlook one of the most important educational elements in the training of their charges. The other day the R.C.M. held a concert conducted by Sir Hubert Parry, in place of the indisposed Cambridge professor. Yesterday the R.A.M. did the same thing with Sir A. C. Mackenzie as chief. Never a chance for the budding musician to conduct.

"Now, it is quite possible that at one or other of

these institutions there is a youth capable of teaching his masters the art of conducting, yet his capability is never tested in public.

"All this must be changed if our system of musical education is to be complete. Every student at the R.A.M. and R.C.M. cannot hope to be principal or a high professor, yet unless he occupy some such exalted position it seems that he cannot exercise himself in one of the most important branches of his art. A very clever and promising 'comedy' overture was played yesterday by the R.A.M. Surely Mr. —— should have conducted his work personally. He and his comrades, at this the most receptive period of their lives, must certainly be allowed to seize such opportunities of conducting in public as now are seized by their masters, who in some cases certainly do not conduct better than a gifted musician like Mr. —— presumably could conduct.

"The evil is a real one, and its remedy both obvious and easy."

I was very glad to read, only a few days ago, that at the Royal College of Music, Professor Villiers Stanford had allowed a student to do this, and had helped him by advice and assistance: but that appeared to be so exceptional a proceeding that it found its way into the press, where I saw the announcement.

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So far as I have been able to discover, the Royal Military School of Music, at Kneller Hall, Hounslow, is the only place where conducting is taught. There, promising bandsmen are put to be trained as bandmasters, and it is very interesting to visit the pleasant grounds on a Wednesday afternoon during the summer months and see the large body of bandsmen, in many different uniforms—English, Irish, Scotch, and some swarthy-faced negroes with immense lips, from the West Indies—playing to an admiring crowd of visitors. There each work is conducted by a different student, who has actual practice under the eye of his instructor.

At this splendid institution the students have daily drill in the use of the baton, under the personal charge of the Director, Captain Arthur Stretton. They learn to beat clearly and with precision, and when they leave their studies to become bandmasters they can conduct any kind of music, from the classics to a regimental burlesque. They are also able to teach their future bandsmen to play upon any instrument, string as well as wind.

We now have a similar establishment for the training of our sailors, at Eastney, under the direction of Lieutenant C. Franklin.

Having sat under many batons during more than a third of a century, I have observed many manners;

and having acted as honorary secretary of a very large musical organisation for seventeen years, I could not fail to discover that many who do their best to guide their forces to an adequate rendering of the music in hand, would be all the better equipped had they the advantage of a broader experience, or some more definite idea of what is expected from them—what to do and what to avoid doing.

Possibly the best way of illustrating the subject will be to mention various conductors who are well known and who cannot help giving the observer an object lesson.

CONDUCTORS.

Samuel Pepys, the famous diarist, made an entry in the year 1661 about a woman “beating time to the music,” but the statement appears to me to be rather vague.

The first authentic account that I can find of the use of a conductor’s baton, instead of the leader’s bow, appeared in a newspaper notice of a Musical Festival, held in the year 1810 at Frankenhausen, and is quoted in “Louis Spohr’s Autobiography” :

Herr Spohr’s leading with a roll of paper, without the least noise and without the slightest contortion of countenance, might be called a *graceful leading*—if that word were sufficient to express the precision and influence impressed by his movements upon the whole mass, strange both to

him and to itself. To this happy talent in Herr Spohr I ascribe, in great part, the excellence and precision—the imposing power, as well as the soft blending of this numerous orchestra with the voices of the singers—in the execution of “*The Creation*.”

The first use of the baton in London occurred at a Philharmonic concert given in 1820, when Spohr says :

It was at that time still the custom there that when symphonies and overtures were performed, the pianist had the score before him, not exactly to conduct from it, but only to read after and to play in with the orchestra at pleasure ; which, when it was heard, had a very bad effect. The real conductor was the first violin, who gave the *tempi*, and now and then, when the orchestra began to falter, gave the beat with the bow of his violin. So numerous an orchestra, standing so far apart from each other as that of the Philharmonic, could not possibly go exactly together, and, in spite of the excellence of the individual members, the ensemble was much worse than we are accustomed to in Germany.

* * * * *

I then took my stand with the score at a separate music-desk in front of the orchestra, drew my directing baton from my coat pocket, and gave the signal to begin. Quite alarmed at such a novel procedure, some of the directors would have protested against it; but when I besought them to grant me at least one trial, they became pacified.

At the Music Exhibition held at the Crystal Palace in 1901, a baton used by Spohr was in one of the glass cases. It was a thick, stumpy stick of less than a foot long rolled round with parchment. A

very clumsy affair. Mendelssohn later on used the baton, a small whalebone one, covered with white leather, and by degrees it has become the recognised method of holding together the scattered forces of a choir or orchestra.

Mr. F. G. Edwards has unearthed the following interesting fact and published it in the "Musical Times" for December, 1903. Mendelssohn's sister Fanny wrote in her diary :

"Berlioz was at Leipzig with us, and his odd manners gave so much offence that Felix was continually being called upon to smooth somebody's ruffled feathers. When the parting came, Berlioz offered to exchange bâtons 'as ancient warriors exchanged their armour,' and in return for Felix's pretty light stick of whalebone covered with white leather, Berlioz sent an enormous cudgel of lime tree covered with bark, with an accompanying letter.

"To the Great Chief, Mendelssohn :

"Great Chief ! We have promised to exchange tomahawks. Mine is a rough one—your's is plain. Only squaws and palefaces are fond of ornate weapons.

"Be my brother ! and when the Great Spirit shall have sent us to hunt in the land of souls, may our warriors hang up our tomahawks together at the door of the Council chamber."

It is amusing and instructive to note the remarks called forth by Mons. Safonoff, the Director of the Conservatoire at Moscow, when on his appearance in London, he conducted without a baton, using his hands only. Spohr related that the Directors of

the Philharmonic Society were quite alarmed at his producing a baton. Now the press were equally concerned that a conductor should do without one! It is evident that a baton grasped in the right hand limits its power, while open and free it is capable of great powers of expression. Truly, we are all creatures of habit, and usually disapprove that to which we are unaccustomed.

One of the strangest conductors that I ever saw was a Chinaman. Sir William Siemens entertained the members of the Society of Arts at an exhibition at South Kensington. Amongst many other attractions there was the Imperial Band from the Court at Pekin. The musicians were gorgeously dressed in coloured silks; they played upon very strange-looking instruments, and sang while they played.

Chinese music must always seem absurd to us because its scale is entirely different from our own. It is strictly mathematical, while ours is not. Theirs consists of twelve equal tones, six male and six female, fixed at exact distances apart. The history of the Chinese scale is a very interesting one, but cannot be gone into here, suffice it now to say that it is a geometrical one based upon scientific principles, while ours is not; our semitones being at irregular distances one from another, so far as the number of vibrations goes.

It follows that their gamut strikes our ears as most erratic and more like the "caterwauling" that one hears when suddenly awakened in the small hours of the night by the nocturnal courtship of the "harmless, necessary cat."

Now these musicians played and sang very long epic poems relating the history of some of their great ones, while the conductor, who stood all the time, kept striking a box at irregular intervals with a stick. Sometimes he would give several raps in succession, but each long verse or period closed with a shower of taps.

The well-dressed and bejewelled crowd lost its sense of decorum, and laughed aloud, while some mischievous wags kept bursting in with shouts of "Encore." At last the Chinamen seemed to realise that they were being laughed at; nevertheless they politely kept up the entertainment, until at length, wearied out and disappointed, these men, who were bright particular stars, and shone in their high places about the Celestial Court, gave up in despair and retired, thinking, doubtless, that the British upper classes can be sometimes very rude to what they do not understand.

My earliest recollection carries me back to the days of the great Mons. Jullien. It was he who established the popular Promenade Concerts. He was

a short, stout man, with plenty of curly hair, an immense expanse of shirt-front, gold chains and rings. What he was as conductor I can only surmise from the immense popularity which he achieved. His "Monstre Concerts" were arranged on a scale of splendour hitherto unknown. My memory recalls a very showy man reclining gracefully in a huge gold and crimson armchair in the middle of his band, and facing the audience between each number on the programme. He was what we should now call "a character." His end was a very sad one.

Sir Michael Costa began his musical career (one of the most successful on record) as a tenor vocalist, but not being satisfied with his reception, turned his attention to conducting.

The Sacred Harmonic Society, under his baton, became the most famous of our London musical organisations. It was that body which carried out the first Handel Festival, held at the Crystal Palace in 1857. The great orchestra built for the occasion was to be only a temporary structure, but it still stands, and is in constant use. Of the many thousands of persons who occupy it from time to time, probably very few are aware that they are sitting over a number of statues, some of colossal size, which were covered in and cannot be removed.

Costa had the way of commanding respect and

attention. His beat—the vital point with an amateur choir or orchestra—was square and clear. No one ever misunderstood his meaning. His singular coolness and self-possession amused us when, one night, he stood up in the midst of his great choir of ladies and gentlemen at Exeter Hall, and taking from his pocket a large dressing-comb, slowly and calmly combed his hair. This was a small thing, but it showed character. A man who would do that could face anything. He was a masterful man, and commanded success.

Another incident will serve to show the kind of man that he was.

One night, at the opera, a liveried servant came to the door of the orchestra, near the conductor's desk, and said that Mr. Arthur Sullivan, the organist, had not arrived (the organ on the stage would be wanted in a few minutes). Sir Michael, in a few short and hurried words, told him to tell Mr. — (a second violinist, who acted as deputy organist) to go to the instrument. The servant, not catching the instructions, hesitated, but dared not ask for a repetition. He went to another door and muttered something about the organ. Mr. —, not having received any orders, did not leave his seat, but realising, with his neighbours, that a storm was brewing, sat in increasing doubt and fear of the result. The

felt ready to sink through the floor, the organ sounded. Costa sat still, but an expression began to creep over his face that showed surprise : he knew that it was not the violinist playing, but was much too proud to look round ; he glanced out of the extreme corners of his eyes to satisfy himself. It appeared that Mr. Sullivan had arrived in the nick of time to save the situation.

Costa was much too grand and proud a man to *see* that his orders were attended to ; he gave them that was enough ; that they were carried out followed always as a matter of course.

Sir Julius Benedict was a very good and successful conductor. I think it was in the year 1867 that he was engaged to conduct a series of oratorio performances at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, where the choir was most unruly. For a performance of the "Messiah," a crowd gathered on the gallery overlooking the orchestra and climbed over the railings. Some had music and some had not ! It was simply a mob without any organisation at all. Never had man so thankless a task, and he had to resign his position and write to the press disclaiming any responsibility.

On one occasion I was present at a rehearsal when "Elijah" was to be performed by a "scratch" choir.

It went so badly that at last Benedict, in well chosen words, and very broken English, said: "Ladies and gentlemen, I was present at the first production of this work in Birmingham. We had no fewer than fifteen rehearsals although it was a professional choir. I ask you, how can you expect to do it with me? I appeal to those ladies and gentlemen who have never sung in this work to kindly retire." It was so gracefully put that a large number did leave the room, and the proceedings afterwards were much more satisfactory.

Sir Joseph Barnby will live long in the memory of all who had the pleasure of sitting under him. The beautiful bronze bust, with gold spectacles on, erected at the Royal Albert Hall by the members of his great choir, is a permanent testimony of regard. As a conductor his method was admirable; a firm, square beat, few words, and those straight to the purpose. His pithy instructions were often contained in one word. "Short," "crisp," "bright," would convey to his forces all that was needed at the moment. As a contrast I will mention a rehearsal held recently, where the conductor stopped repeatedly and indulged in this kind of instruction: "That won't do at all"—*pause*—"Now attention, ease"—*pause*—"Now begin at the top of page forty, first bar"—*pause*—"You know where it is, don't

you? top of page fifty, bar number one. Now, are you ready?"—*rap*—"Don't make a mistake this time—page fifty, first bar"—*rap, rap*—"Now I shan't start till you are quite ready." This sort of thing went on all the evening, and not only killed time, but exhausted our patience. How different the one word "page fifty," and then start at once!

If a conductor allows his people to stop long enough to resume the conversation entered upon when they had a bar and a half rest a little way back, they of course go on with it again, and it is some time before you get properly under weigh. It is best not to have any long pauses, but stop as short a time as possible and go on at once.

Sir Joseph was always admirably clear and direct. From obscure beginnings his powerful talents and genial personality raised him to a foremost place. He possessed in a pre-eminent degree that magnetic force, without which a good conductor is impossible—the power to draw men to himself and to gain their confidence.

Amongst the most successful conductors was Sir Arthur Sullivan. He was charged by some critics with coldness, but that was a mistake. He was very calm and clear, and always conducted sitting—posture not more favourable for a conductor than a singer; but his results were second to none for

broadness. It is true that he did not bother and tease as some do; but the Philharmonic Society's orchestra was never finer than when under his control.

Contrasted with the quieter manner of Sir Arthur Sullivan, was Herr Eduard Strauss, of Vienna, the great composer of dance music. He may be described as the last of the "Leaders." During the last few years the title "Principal" has been applied to the leading violinist, but formerly, before the introduction of the baton, the leader actually played either the harpsichord or violin.

Eduard Strauss stood with his back to the band, violin in one hand and bow in the other. In that position he swung his arms and his body about with great activity, but not in a way that would pull an amateur choir through an oratorio. He was one of the best conductors of dance music.

As a vigorous conductor, Hector Berlioz was conspicuous. On one occasion, at rehearsal, the harps with their cases on were put together to enclose a small space wherein he could change his shirt, the operation being necessary in consequence of his intense exertions.

Again, as a contrast, see Mons. Glazounov, a native of Russia: tall, massive, fair hair cut quite short, stolid of countenance, he stands like a Gren-

dier, with his heels together, and with broad sweep controls all before him. There is only one other who has so greatly impressed me with power.

A student of conducting wishing to know how to deport himself with dignity and grace, and achieve the very highest results without fuss or excitement, not even "turning a hair," should make Herr Arthur Nikisch his model.

Edvard Grieg is a very interesting man, short, small-made, with a very bushy head of flaxen hair, and heavy fair moustaches, which he keeps smoothing down with one hand while he bows in a nervous manner, as though overwhelmed by applause. His method of conducting is very peculiar: he has a wide beat, but the left hand is brought more into use than I ever saw it before. At one time he holds his left hand straight out, palm downwards, at another straight up, at another he closes his fist tightly and turned towards the performers; again closed, but the other way round. No doubt all these and many more positions are signs of definite meaning to those accustomed to him.

How great the contrast when one sees a well-known Englishman who uses his left hand all through the concert simply flopping up and down as though loose at the wrist! He has practically given up half his power.

The left hand should always be held in reserve to indicate dynamic force and things other than *tempo*. Great use is made of the left hand where controlled.

Mr. Henry J. Wood, of Queen's Hall fame, has risen so rapidly in favour that he has been described by some of his admirers as "the only English conductor." This is, of course, one of those pleasant exaggerations beloved of the gushing, but he certainly does deserve and has our very hearty praise alike for his great skill and enormous industry. To look down a season's programmes fills one with amazement. As Goldsmith says :

The wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.

There is one conductor known all the world over as a man who has probably done more for orchestral music in England than any other living man, yet his choir has never been so good as his orchestra for the reason that it was so very difficult to understand his wishes. On one memorable occasion "Acis and Galatea" was in rehearsal. The chorus, "The Monster Polypheme," gave a great deal of trouble. The conductor suddenly disappeared, and after the lapse of a few minutes he came upon the platform, his

hair all up on end, chin on breast, and arms folded, taking enormously long steps, singing :

See—what—am—ple—strides—he—takes.

We now grasped his meaning and all went well. He wanted the passage more staccato, and got it.

A conductor must not only know what he wants, but have the power of communicating his ideas.

Amongst our best modern conductors may be mentioned Sir Hubert Parry (English), whose genial personality wins all comers to himself; Sir Villiers Stanford (Irish), Sir Alexander Mackenzie (Scotch), Mr. Allen Gill, Mr. Arthur Payne, Mr. Joseph Ivimey, Mr. Dan Godfrey, of Bournemouth, and Mr. George Riseley, of Bristol.

Of Welsh conductors, there are many in the Principality, where vocal music is so largely cultivated that every village has its choir.

Amongst conductors of large choral bodies, Dr. Coward, of Sheffield, Mr. E. Minshall, author of "Organs, Organists and Choirs," and Mr. L. C. Venables (whose admirable book on "The Choral Society" (Curwen) gives much useful information), are well worthy of observation for the valuable lessons they afford.

A very interesting conductor that I lately came across had a most curious way of addressing the

band in a whisper : with forefinger to lip and raised eyebrows, he gave his instructions in a tone of voice scarcely audible. His polished politeness, together with a quaintness not describable in words, was most uncommon. He would stop the band and whisper, "Beautiful—beautiful—*don't* play it like that!—but like this" (imitating the bow with his baton).

The novelty of his style amused one, yet it had very good points, while his perfect knowledge of the score and of how to play the more difficult passages commanded our admiration.

The late Mons. Ch. Lamoureux, of Paris, was beyond doubt one of the finest conductors of our time. When he paid his first visit to London, he astonished us all by his mastery over the forces at his command. His orchestra was organised on terms quite unknown in England. Every performer was in his personal pay, and nearly all of the instruments belonged to himself (not the players). He kept a permanent staff, one member of which was the "Luthier," whose business it was to keep all the instruments in repair. It looked to us very odd to see men in blue blouses come upon the orchestra and polish and examine the instruments before the bandsmen put in an appearance; and a busy group of helpers, also in blouses, clearing up the music

and instruments when the concert had come to a conclusion.

Every detail seemed to be studied to produce effects which only a Frenchman knows how to produce or cares to obtain.

The tympani, which with us consist of three or four drums made of copper, and getting blacker with every month of use until they are dull, unsightly objects, were in this case four drums, played by two men, each instrument having a shallow brass shell, and brightly burnished. The three flutes were all silver, and in other respects appearances were obviously studied. His men all played exactly together "to order," as only a race subject to conscription and military rule could possibly do. The Frenchman is controlled by his superior officer from the cradle up, and when he dies, an official walks at the head of his funeral procession. Hence it is that the ten double-bass players all used instruments alike, with lion's-head scroll, and straight bows all alike, and stopped the strings all of them in the same position. You did not see some of his violinists playing in the first and some in the third position !

When the remarkable playing of this orchestra was considered, it dawned upon us that here lay the secret. M^s. Lamoureux had a vast human machine

which worked his will only. With Englishmen there is always that indefinable quality known as individuality, but here the individual skill as a performer was brought under the complete control of the presiding genius.

At the last concert of the first series, an immense laurel wreath, tied with ribbon of the French colours, was handed up to the conductor, who turned towards his men and indicated that it was for them; at a signal they all rose together and bowed. This was another novelty, and has since been tried in London, but the difference between the two styles is very marked. When the Englishmen rise, it is one at a time, and while some bow others turn towards their neighbours and smile at the absurdity (to them) of the thing.

I fear English boys are not taught to bow, and cannot pick up the grace in after life.

Lamoureux's coming amongst us had good effect in stimulating our musicians, who now find that, with attention to detail, we are not left behind, but can play as well as any foreign band, when properly conducted.

Mons. Lamoureux had every string player into his room before going on the platform, that his instrument might be tuned to a large fork provided for the purpose. Mr. Henry Wood immediately adopted

the same method, and Mr. Arthur W. Payne, one of the keenest and most painstaking of our conductors, goes about amongst his men in the band room, violin in hand, and personally ascertains that the instruments are tuned to his satisfaction.

I have devoted so much space to Mons. Lamoureux because his permanent orchestra enabled him to institute many practices which are impossible to us, who hear mostly only "scratch bands." I firmly believe that had we the same advantages of organisation, our own results would be quite equal to any the world can produce.

The following paragraph, relating an interview with the famous Frenchman, is taken from the "Daily Mail" of April 13, 1899:

"I am much in love with England and the English, and I keenly regretted not being able to go to London last November." His fair interviewer then asked him what the *cher maître* thought of English audiences and musicians. To which question he replied that our musical knowledge is infinitely greater than could possibly be imagined; in English society are amateurs whose musical education leaves absolutely nothing to be desired; the time has come to protest against the false idea generally obtaining on the Continent, as to the precise amount of art in the English temperament; the Queen's Hall Orchestra is of the highest possible order, and Mr. Newman a musician of the very highest merit.

M. Lamoureux ends his sentence with impressive eulogy: "I do not doubt but that in ten years' time the English

race will produce some great musical genius who shall rank with Shakespeare in literature; their musical education is so sure and so complete."

"Grand merci," M. Lamoureux.

Professor Villiers Stanford, in a letter to the "Times," said :

Our orchestras, singers and composers are all comparable with the best that can be found in any country. There is a wave of enthusiasm for the art which is gathering force year by year, the like of which has not been seen in England for three centuries.

The grandest conductor that I have yet seen is, beyond all doubt, Dr. Hans Richter. The first time that I saw him he conducted a Beethoven symphony to perfection *without a score*. It was a revelation to me to see his perfect command and breadth of treatment. There is no fuss or ostentation about him, and he is simply worshipped by his band. There cannot be two opinions upon the superb merit of this great man, and we are proud of the fact that he has now made England his place of residence.

One small fact amongst others struck my fancy. When he was conducting, instead of retiring to the artists' room, with the grand ones, he took a chair amongst his own men; in fact, he identified himself with them instead of being above them.

The magnetic force exerted by some conductors upon their bands was well illustrated when I visited,

for the first time, a place of public entertainment, where a first-class permanent orchestra is maintained. I listened with great attention to the perfect ensemble; every part was clean and bright; I felt that nothing more could be desired. Presently another conductor stepped up to the desk; it was the deputy that had been conducting so far.

The new comer was the conductor-in-chief. Directly he took the baton between the tips of his fingers and his thumb in a light and easy fashion, the music became more sparkling than ever; the men all seemed to me to get nearer to the front edge of their chairs. The band before was perfect, now it had gained something indefinable by the presence of this man. What was it? The only word likely to explain it is "charm"—a quality possessed by few, but intensified by knowledge and confidence in its use.

There are, of course, many other conductors of repute whom I could indicate as giving valuable object lessons every time they appear in public, but it is obvious that they cannot all be profitably named here. While many have their faults, all have points of interest; and should one of these peruse this paper, I hope he will accept the assurance that his name is omitted because his methods are both good and well known, or that I have not had the advantage of seeing him conduct.

Without doubt Dr. F. H. Cowen is the "Emperor" of English speaking conductors, a mere enumeration of his conducting engagements at the present time will suffice to show in what high esteem he stands. He is the conductor of the Philharmonic Society of London, the Philharmonic Society of Liverpool, the Glasgow Orchestral Concerts, and the Edinburgh Orchestral Concerts amongst others. Reams of verbal description (at least of mine) would not be so eloquent in his praise as this list, incomplete as it is, of societies whose elected chief he is.

He conducts all, or nearly all, of the classics without a score, a great feat of memory and confidence; but it has its risks and should not be indulged in by lesser lights, or disaster may follow.

May I be pardoned if I now point out some of the most noticeable defects of a few of our prominent men?

We have got amongst us some famous men belonging to the last generation, and because they are famous we not only bear with their faults, but some young conductors even would justify themselves in copying them! One of the most glaring of these faults is stamping, or marking the time with the foot. The steady tap, tap, is a most unmusical and unjustifiable interruption. At a recent suburban

concert, where everything was well managed, there was this addition of a drum part that hit every beat in every bar. That is what it really amounts to! It is so easy to form a bad manner that young men should guard against this one at all costs. At Kneller Hall, while a band of two hundred and fifty to three hundred soldiers play through a two hours' programme, not one foot is seen to be moving; the conductor gives the beat that all can see, and that is sufficient.

While speaking of soldiers, I may note a new departure of importance. It has always been the practice for the bandmaster to rap his desk at a change of subject. This is done to call attention. I have even seen printed instructions on programmes as to how many raps on the desk would signify a change. Now our best military bandmasters have adopted a silent method, by holding the baton upright and quite still for a space of a bar or two. What the eye can and should see need not be enforced by noise.

Conductors are not seen at their best during a public performance. Then everything has to go in the best way that it can and there is no stopping to correct errors or improve phrasing. Many unmusical people imagine that the conductor is more ornamental than useful, in fact that feeling is so pre-

valent, that when Sir Michael Costa tried to become a member of the Athenæum Club, the most exclusive club in London—His Grace the Duke of — objected, saying that he always understood that the man who flourished a stick at the head of a party of fiddlers was a mountebank! Nevertheless Sir Michael was elected.

To see a conductor at work and to understand what it is that he does it is necessary to attend rehearsals under his directions, to see him all nerves, stopping, correcting, and inspiring his performers, then it will be found that conducting is real hard work, if seriously undertaken, and that the conducting of an amateur orchestra is infinitely more difficult and exhausting than it is with a professional one. In the latter case all the musicians are trained, more or less, whereas the amateurs are more liable to play wrong notes or be careless, or at least less exact than those who make music their profession.

While some conductors are lax in their methods, others work really hard to produce the best results and their efforts are scarcely recognised by the average listener, who does not know what a great deal of trouble has been taken to produce that which he is listening to.

It is not easy to gain access to rehearsals unless one sits in either a choir or a band; therefore every-

one who aspires to conduct should qualify for a seat, that he may see as many conductors at work as he possibly can and make each one of them a study.

Some of our most eminent conductors strongly object to the presence of visitors at rehearsal as they do not want to give away the knowledge that represents a life's study, in fact, one of our leading men keeps a sharp eye upon all the doors, and if one should be opened ever so little, he at once stops and waits until the intrusive head has been withdrawn.

A story is told of Anton Rubinstein. When he was conductor at the Imperial Opera House at St. Petersburg, some ladies of the Imperial Family expressed a wish to be present at a rehearsal.

On the fatal morning when the ladies arrived, they found the house in its dismantled condition, the stage cleared and all the place in semi-darkness. Kubinstein then took individual members of the orchestra, such as the second bassoon or one horn, through a bar or two, and kept this up until the ladies discovered that it was not so interesting as they had anticipated, then, when they had taken their departure and were clear off the premises, the rehearsal proper began.

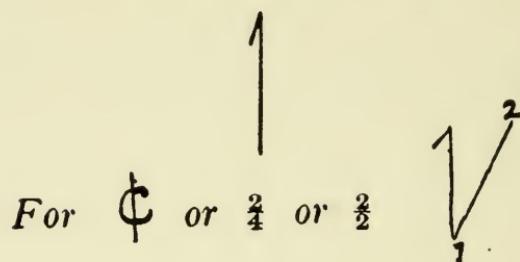
Herr Felix Mottl, when in London recently, conducted a rehearsal of one of Beethoven's symphonies, and electrified his instrumentalists by suddenly

ooking up at one of them and shouting out "As." The expression of surprise that spread itself over the faces melted into a smile, followed by a ripple of laughter, when it was remembered that As is the German for A flat.

It is an enormous advantage if a conductor can sing a passage here and there to illustrate his meaning when correcting his forces. Speaking of the Gloucester Festival of 1901, a press critic signing himself "Lancelot," has said: "None of the conductors seemed to possess a vocal organ worthy of the name, and their attempts to sing sundry themes in their works suggested the need of a few lessons in voice production. Mr. Brewer makes use of a falsetto tone, Sir Hubert Parry hums like a bumble-bee, and Dr. Cowen indulges in syllabic enunciations of which remarkable examples are 'Lum par,' 'Pom, pom, pom,' 'Par da te tum,' and 'D-a-ar-tce-ar.'"

Now as to the act of beating. It is often a painful sight to see a man struggling with a baton grasped by the middle, and both of his arms flying up and down, his back view reminding one of a penguin. Most men can look fairly graceful if they do not disregard such a matter. As I have before suggested, one arm at a time is enough for most purposes, the left hand being brought into use only as occasion may require.

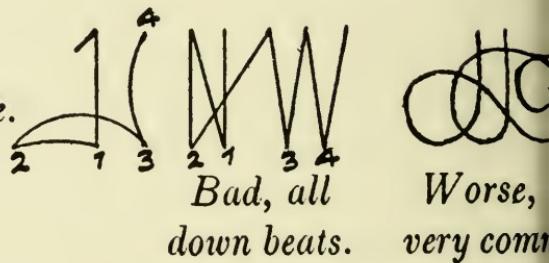
Before starting, or after a pause,
raise the Baton slightly before
bringing it down, as a warning.



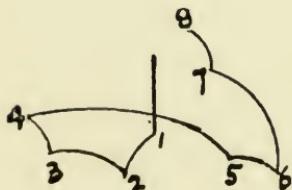
For $\frac{C}{4}$ or $\frac{2}{4}$ or $\frac{2}{2}$

If slow then beat four in the bar,
as below.

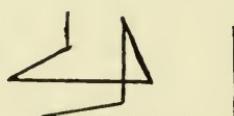
For Common time.



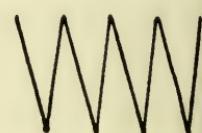
For slow four beat eight in the bar.



Good.



Bad.



Atrocious.

For $\frac{3}{8}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$.



Good.

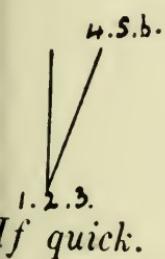


Bad,

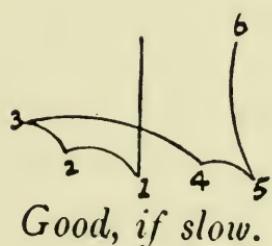
For $\frac{3}{4}$. If it is quick or Valse time then beat one in the bar.



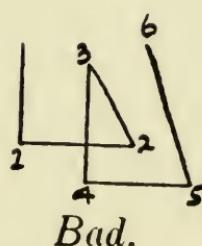
For $\frac{8}{8}$



If quick.

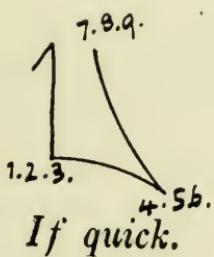


Good, if slow.

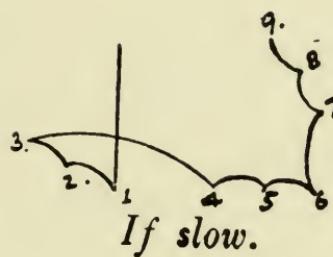


Bad.

For $\frac{9}{8}$

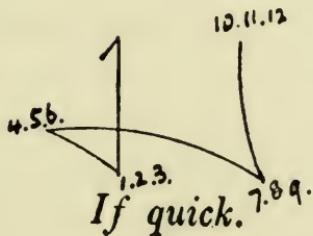


If quick.

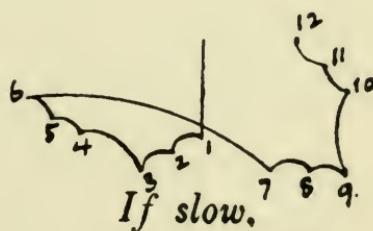


If slow.

For $\frac{12}{8}$



If quick.



If slow.

It is of the utmost importance that only one down beat should be given in each bar. A short time since I played in an orchestra where the professional conductor beat four in the bar, the first three being all down beats. It is true that the second ended to his left, and the third to his right hand, but they all began at the top. It was therefore extremely difficult to know where we were. The bar should be so beaten that we always know the part of it we are at.

Another very faulty way is to allow the baton to describe ovals or even circles. Each beat should have its point and the down beat should rest just long enough to fix the accent, that being the most important one.

Sometimes one sees $\frac{6}{8}$ beat as though it were $\frac{3}{4}$ twice over. This is wrong; there should be only one down beat.

Recently a conductor of a very large amateur choir, performing before some thousands of spectators, beat a slow four by making four down and four up beats. Nothing could possibly be more confusing, and it could only be tolerated where everyone sang from ear.

The diagrams suggest considerations at the hands of those who would conduct either choir or band, the principle being always the same.

In training a choir it is, of course, absolutely

necessary that the choirmaster should have a quick ear to detect faults of intonation; wrong notes abound; but one of the most important qualifications is that he should be able to correct bad pronunciation.

At a choral competition held lately, a highly respectable choir, in singing the test piece did not observe uniformity. The sopranos sang a few bars, answered by the altos, the same words being used by the composer for both voices, but not by the singers. The altos did not pronounce them in the same way as the sopranos. As these phrases came several times over, the effect was ludicrous. This indicated not only the grossest neglect on the part of the choirmaster, but want of observation on the part of the singers themselves. It reminded me of the story of the tall English spinster and the short stout Scotchman who sang the duet "The Swallows." Each answered each—

They fly away—they flee awa—they fly away—they flee awa.

All churchgoers are familiar with the response, given by the boys—"Lor—dhave mercy upon us, and incline ou—rhearts to keep thi—slaw."

The constantly recurring words of the "Hallelujah Chorus" will be remembered—"For He shall reign fo—rever—an—dever."

The very awkward line in Cardinal Newman's beautiful hymn is an illustration of difficulty to be overcome :

Lead, kindly Light, amidst the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on (pronounced meyon).

Numerous examples will readily occur to any one who has given the slightest attention to the subject and it will be conceded that the words are always of the most vital importance; otherwise it would save much trouble if we had barrel-organ music, which would be more note perfect and strict in *tempo*.

This brings me to the question of the choice of music for a choir. It will be at once admitted that the conductor, or other responsible officer, who makes the selection, should exercise sound discretion. I remember a competition in which a mixed choir of young men and women were made to sing a part-song all about kissing. Now kissing is a subject very attractive to some mortals under certain circumstances, but a public exhibition is not the one usually chosen. The selection of the piece was a defect in good taste.

I know an anthem the burden of which, often repeated, is, "The new wine made the maidens glad"! This, of course, is scriptural, but authority has said that things may be lawful, but may not be expedient!

In church services the words are the spirit of the whole, while the music carries them upon its wings;

therefore the language used must be perfectly clear. It is best that a conductor should treat a vocal work as a poem, and know the words and their full meaning.

Whether choirmasters should be singers is a question that has been discussed from time to time. Unfortunately many organists who fill the double office of organist and choirmaster are selected for their having successfully played so many hymn tunes and voluntaries. Now it does not at all follow that because a man can play the organ he can also train a choir. A case that came under my personal notice will prove this. Two churchwardens in North London suddenly found themselves called upon to choose an organist and choirmaster. As neither of them had the slightest knowledge of music they asked the retiring organist to sit in a pew behind them. The candidates played, the late organist wrote a name on a slip of paper and quietly dropped it over the pew. The churchwardens retired to the vestry and solemnly chose their man whose name was on the paper. There was a surpliced choir at this church, and much choir work to do. My own view of the matter is that it needs a vocalist to train vocalists. It is perfectly true that there are a great number who are able to teach singing, and who produce good results from their choirs (yet themselves

lack singing voices), but that is because they have studied the subject. All who would conduct a choir should take pains to observe our best solo singers and choruses, and get from them valuable suggestions which can be made good use of in developing one's own choir.

There are churches where the two offices are kept apart, and the results are better, for it unfortunately happens that one who relies upon his organ to pull the service through will make organ playing "the thing," while a vocalist will maintain that it is the function of the organist to accompany the singing: and this surely is the more reasonable view of the matter.

In arranging a choir, the sopranos should always be on the left hand of the conductor, the altos on the right, the tenors behind the sopranos, and the basses behind the altos.

In conducting an orchestra, a very different knowledge is required, inasmuch as numerous instruments of different tone and pitch are used, and the conductor should have acquaintance—at least a "speaking acquaintance"—with them. Whether he should be able to play upon them all is very doubtful, but it certainly would give him a much better grip of his subject.

Each instrument has its own proper function, and

also its own prejudices, if I may be allowed to use the expression. Often we find music written that is not difficult when you look at it, but to play it requires much skill, because awkwardly placed. On string instruments there are always alternative ways of fingering, and a conductor should be able to indicate the most favourable. Wind instruments present many difficulties, and there are not two alike. I have often noticed that where the conductor is a violinist, he gives nearly all his attention to the strings, and the wind-players have to do the best they can without his help.

That veteran, the late Sir August Manns, who achieved the wonderful record of having conducted an orchestral concert at the Crystal Palace every day for nearly fifty years, made his first appearance there as a solo violinist, and when first appointed conductor, used to conduct with his bow. He was formerly a clarinet player and flautist, and a band-master in the German army.

When Dr. Richter first came to London to conduct, some difficulty occurred with a horn part. He had the instrument passed up to him, and showed how the passage should be played. This incident did more to establish him in a firm position with the band than years of talk would have done. The men at once saw that he was no ordinary musician. The

French horn is far away the most difficult wind instrument to understand; hence in Germany (where more form is observed in all social functions than in England), the first horn player is nearly always the president of the band. When a speech has to be made, he makes it. When a deputation is formed, he heads it. When a member of the band dies, he walks before his companions in the procession. Thus Dr. Richter scored a point, and a big one too.

The following is from the "Daily News":

Richter's versatility is very pleasantly alluded to by his former school-fellow, Herr Franz Fridberg, in an article in the "Berliner Tageblatt." One reason of his great success as a conductor, it is well known, lies in his ability to play in some sort of fashion, almost every instrument in the orchestra. As a student of nineteen he was much the same. Herr Fridberg says:

"Was there no trombonist, Richter laid down his horn and seized the trombone; next time it would be the oboe, the bassoon, or the trumpet, and then he would pop up among the violins. I saw him once manipulating the contra-bass, and on the kettledrums he was unsurpassed. When we—the Conservatory Orchestra—under Hellmesberger's leading, once performed a mass in the Church of the Invalides, Richter sang. How he did sing! At times he helped out the bassi in difficult passages, at others the tenors, and I believe he even sang with the soprani. I learned to know him on that day, moreover, as an excellent organist. It excited uncommon merriment among us fellow performers when he stood there, and with an important look, sent out, over the whole orchestra and chorus, his 'Crucifixus' into the body of the church."

Sir Arthur Sullivan, when a boy, could play upon any instrument in the band of which his father was bandmaster, except those too large for his lips; and, when studying at the Royal Academy of Music, he used to fill up any part that was missing in the orchestra.

It will readily be conceded that one who possesses full information will have great advantage over one who has not the same equipment.

The late Lieutenant S. C. Griffiths, of Kneller Hall, in his excellent book, "The Military Band" (Rudall, Carte and Co.), says :

He (the conductor) requires a practical knowledge of instruments, and should be a moderate performer upon them. This is only to be attained by practice, but is not such a difficult task as may be supposed.

In seating an orchestra the first violins sit to the left hand of the conductor, the second violins to his right; violas in the middle, and 'cellos and basses behind them; the wind department ranged behind the strings in the following order, counting from the left hand: flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets (or cornets), three trombones (alto, tenor and bass), tympani, etc., behind them in the centre. In England the band always sits in front of the choir, while on the Continent the reverse is often the case, the choir being in front and the band behind.

The former is the most usual form, but of late years orchestras have grown so large in the string division that another form has been adopted at the Queen's Hall with good results.

It is certain that in former times orchestral bands were not so overbalanced by string tone as at present. Sir Michael Costa was the chief of sinners in bringing up both the numbers and the pitch at which they played.

The King's private band consists of five first violins, four second, three violas, two 'cellos, and two double basses, with wind.

The band that played daily for so many years at the Crystal Palace consisted of six first violins, four second, three violas, three 'cellos and three double basses with full wind. For the Saturday concerts the numbers were increased to sixteen first, twelve second, nine violas, eight 'cellos, and eight basses, without materially altering the wind parts, except to overcrowd them, as I think.

The Queen's Hall band, on the other hand, consists (in 1906) of fourteen first violins, fourteen second, eight violas, eight 'cellos and six double-basses; yet the same number of wind instruments are employed.

Even greater is the disproportion in some cases. The Philharmonic band contains sixteen first violins,

sixteen second, twelve violas, twelve 'cellos and eleven basses. The result is that the softer-toned instruments—the flutes, especially the second flute, the second oboe, the bassoons, and the French horns—are overpowered. It frequently happens that delicate solo passages for flute or horn are completely swamped by the accompaniment of such a crowd of strings.

If it is possible to play the best music with a band containing nineteen or twenty violins, violas and 'cellos and basses, all told, as at the Crystal Palace; seventy or eighty, as we often find upon an orchestra, is surely out of all proportion, and must destroy the composer's intention, to some extent, by the great preponderance of string tone.

Where a very large number of strings are used I think conductors should double the weaker parts, and so restore, to some extent, the intended balance of tone, but it would be far better to reduce the number of strings until a proper balance of tone-colour was produced.

The following from the "Musical Record" for April 1, 1897, is significant :

Beethoven had to experience the truth of Mattheson's remark as to the reduction of speed in proportion to numbers, when attending a performance of his Symphony in A at the Musical Union (Musik-Verein) in Vienna. He was particularly annoyed by the *tempo* of

the second movement (*allegretto*), which he declared to be much too quick. . . . The performances of the above-mentioned society did not meet with his approval, as the dimensions of their concert hall required a big orchestra. Beethoven declared, however, that he did not write his symphonies for such numbers of instrumentalists as the Musical Union generally employed, as "he did not want noisy music." For his purposes he required only about sixty good musicians, being convinced that only that number would be able to produce correctly the rapid changes of light and shade, and that therefore the character of each movement, together with its poetical contents, would not be destroyed.

When Haydn produced his symphonies in London, in 1791, he had an orchestra of thirty-five.

Now that so much is being said as to the performance of "The Messiah" as Handel wrote it, some good may arise if we try to restore the balance so disturbed by the great addition recently made to the strings for the sake of brilliancy and force.

It will be noticed that nearly the whole of the difference between sixty players and one hundred would be the additions to the bowed instruments.

It has therefore been found of great advantage to place the wood-wind in the centre of the orchestra, just in front of the conductor, the horns behind the wood; first violins and violas to the left, second violins to the right, 'cellos and basses divided, some on each side, trombones behind to the right.

This method of seating brings the less powerful

instruments more forward, and they are better heard by the audience.

One reason why amateur bands are so often painful to listen to is that insufficient attention is paid to tuning. What usually happens is this. A band meets, say, once a week; an Englishman's privilege is to be always a little late! the practice commences, say, ten minutes after the appointed hour, when only one-half or two-thirds of the players have arrived. They tune at starting; others come and join in from time to time. In the course of half-an-hour there are not two instruments exactly in tune, partly because of the late comers and partly because instruments not in constant use quickly get "out."

A conductor should see that his band is dead in tune from time to time. If it is worth while for some of our great ones to take so much trouble with a professional band, as I have already mentioned, what can we say to one who neglects this precaution when dealing with amateurs? Zeal counts for nothing, skill for little more, if the playing is out of tune.

There are two grave faults that amateur conductors (and some professional ones also) fall into. One is that of making pauses, or waiting between the numbers of a continuous work. The story, narrative, or description, should run through without breaking it up into short sections. It is easy to ima-

gine the great loss that occurs if a pause is allowed between the recitative of Stephen and the immediately following chorus, "Stone him to death," in Mendelssohn's "St. Paul." The abrupt change in tonality is not heard and the wonderful effect is lost, if there is a break. The same thing in kind will occur in many works if continuity is not observed.

The other is, that in conducting solos, either vocal or instrumental, they are apt to enforce their own *tempi* upon the performer; instead of which the soloist should give his, or her, own interpretation of the work, and be followed by the conductor, who will watch every inflection of tone and *tempo*, and accommodate the accompaniment accordingly. I have known a professional conductor to have the assurance to stand up in a church and conduct a professional singer through his solos, although the organist was round the corner and quite out of sight of the baton!

Once upon a time I saw a professional conduct a performance of the "Messiah" at such a rate that "All we like sheep" became a lively polka; they were remarkably jolly sheep! and the solos were taken at such a rush that they lost the character that we are accustomed to and some of the more florid ones nearly broke down, much to the horror of the victims who had to sing to such a beat.

Notes on Conductors and Conducting. 45

Every amateur conductor should provide himself with a "Dictionary of Musical Terms," a pocket metronome (one made like a tape measure to roll up in a metal case is a convenient pattern), and a tuning-fork.

The following are some of the books that would be found very interesting and instructive. There are, of course, many others, but it is needless to name them all. The last is a very instructive, chatty and musing book for players of brass instruments, as full of information as an "egg is of meat."

- "A Short Dictionary of Musical Terms." KENNEDY.
(*Curwen and Sons*, 1s.)
- "A Dictionary of Musical Terms." SIR J. STAINER AND W. BARRETT. (*Novello and Co.*, 1s.)
- "Organs, Organists and Choirs." MINSHALL.
(*Curwen and Sons*, 1s. 6d.)
- "Choral and Orchestral Societies." VENABLES.
(*Curwen and Sons*, 2s. 6d.)
- "The Study of the Orchestra." HAMILTON CLARK.
(*Rider and Sons*, 1s. 6d.)
- "Instrumentation." DR. E. PROUT. (*Novello and Co.*, 2s.)
- "The Orchestra." DR. E. PROUT. 2 vols., 5s. each.
(*Augener and Co.*)
- "Instrumentation." HECTOR BERLIOZ.
(*Novello and Co.*, 12s.)
- "The Military Band." GRIFFITHS.
(*Rudall, Carte and Co.*, 5s.)
- "Talks with Bandsmen." ALGERNON T. ROSE.
(*Rider and Sons*, 2s. 6d.)

One of the most important officers of a choral society or an orchestra is the librarian. The con-

ductor must be sure that he will get his work done before the hour appointed for rehearsal. Unless this is attended to, some part, perhaps a large part, of the little time given to practice is frittered away in handing round copies.

I was present on one occasion at the practice of a large choir. The conductor came in about a quarter-of-an-hour late (as usual); he went straight to his desk and at once started a piece. After about ten minutes of futile endeavour he suddenly looked up and said, "Haven't you got your music?" No! not one-third of the persons present had any copies! We then plunged at once into another work, with the same question and the same answer to follow! A third time we started in vain, because it was nobody's business to act as librarian. After wasting an hour we got under weigh. This is an example of the manner in which a choir may be spoilt by neglect, as those performers who can be really useful will not put up with that sort of management.

Unpunctuality and inattention have broken up many a promising organisation.

It is a good plan to have a small sheet of brown paper (but not the noisy kind that makes a rustle when moved), in the absence of proper portfolios, for each desk. When folded, it makes a wrapper that should hold everything that is to be played or

sung; otherwise there is an unreasonable pause between each piece while parts are distributed. These packets should be prepared at least one day before the meeting, and should always be closed by the people using them directly the rehearsal is finished. This prevents the copies getting mixed, and causing the librarian needless trouble in rearranging them.

The position of conductor is a very exacting one, and not free from criticism; therefore one should be careful to be as well equipped for the work as time and circumstance will allow. That a good musician is in consequence a good conductor is not true; many splendid performers are bad conductors, owing to their not being alert to catch passing thoughts as they arise out of the rehearsal, or slow to express their ideas. Perhaps the worst of all are composers. It may sound strange to say so, but it is largely true: when I have heard musicians spoken of as being "touchy" or "over-sensitive," I have replied that it is that fact which accounts for their being musicians. It is the supersensitive natures only which can develop in that direction. If a person is not sensitive, he cannot be musical. Hence composers whose faculties are not as other men's, but more acutely attuned, are too excitable for the work. They are apt to lose their heads; while a conductor should be like the captain of a ship in a gale, the

last to be deprived of his judgment. There are exceptions, of course. Sir Joseph Barnby was one; both Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Professor Stanford are "level-headed men," but the exception is said to prove the rule.

Sir George Grove, in his article on Beethoven, in the "Dictionary of Music and Musicians," says :

As a conductor his motions were most extravagant. At a *pianissimo* he would crouch down so as to be hidden by the desk, and then, as the *crescendo* increased, would gradually rise, beating all the time, until at the *fortissimo* he would spring into the air with his arms extended. . . . When, as was sometimes the case, after he became deaf, he lost his place, and these motions did not coincide with the music, the effect was very unfortunate, though not so unfortunate as it would have been had he himself been aware of the mistake.

The following story, obviously made as picturesque as possible, will be found in "Louis Spohr's Autobiography":

Upon my expressing my astonishment to Seyfried at this (Beethoven's method of conducting), he related to me a trag-i-comic circumstance that had occurred at Beethoven's last concert at the theatre "an der Wien."

Beethoven was playing a new pianoforte concerto of his, but forgot at the first *tutti* that he was a solo player, and springing up began to direct in his usual way. At the first *sforzando* he threw out his arms so wide asunder, that he knocked both the lights of the piano upon the ground. The audience laughed, and Beethoven was so incensed at this disturbance that he made the orchestra cease playing and began anew. Seyfried, fearing that a repetition of the accident would occur at

the same passage bade two boys of the chorus place themselves on either side of Beethoven, and hold the lights in their hands. One of the boys innocently approached nearer, and was reading also the notes of the pianoforte part. When, therefore, the fatal *sforzando* came, he received from Beethoven's out-thrown right hand so smart a blow on the mouth that the poor boy let fall the light from terror. The other boy, more cautious, had followed with anxious eyes every motion of Beethoven, and by suddenly stooping at the eventful moment, he avoided a slap in the mouth. If the public were unable to restrain their laughter before, they could now much less, and broke out into a regular roar. Beethoven got into such a rage that at the first chords half a dozen strings broke. Every endeavour of the real lovers of music to restore calm and attention was for the moment useless. The first *allegro* was therefore lost to the public. From that fatal evening Beethoven would not give another concert.

The following appeared in the "Musical World":

An interesting article might be written on the great composer in the character of conductor. Handel was the first of the masters to have much experience in conducting. Haydn came next, putting in long years of work with the Esterhazy band. Mendelssohn was eminent as a conductor, combining the decision and personal influence of a great leader with all the requisite technical knowledge. Berlioz made a very good conductor when he was in sympathy with the composer being conducted. Wagner, although extremely fond of conducting, was never successful with the bâton, and at the Bayreuth Festival, as well as at the Albert Hall, he had the good sense to resign it to Dr. Richter. We are reminded of all this by the following letter of Meyerbeer which has come to light. The letter runs: "I am not born to be a good conductor. People say that a good *chef d'orchestre* ought to be a little rude. I do not say

that this is the case; but rudeness has always been contrary to my nature. It gives me a very disagreeable impression when I see distinguished artists treated as one would not treat a servant. I do not think a conductor should be rude or rough, but he ought to show himself energetic, he ought to be able to make a severe observation, or even to administer a stern reprimand without going beyond the bounds of good breeding. At the same time he ought to have the power of attracting to himself the love of all his artists, who should at the same time love and fear him. He must not show any weakness of character, otherwise he will lose much of the respect which is due to him. As for me, I should not be energetic enough, exacting enough, during the rehearsals, and that is why I so willingly resign the bâton to others. Rehearsals have generally made me ill." This letter might be recommended to the attention of a good many of our conductors—no names being mentioned.

An English composer has "slated" our conductors rather badly for being mere "mechanics." It happened that I saw this same composer conduct one of his own works, when he swung his baton about in a most erratic manner, stabbing the air in every direction and, as it seemed to me, causing the players much trouble. After the concert was over I asked one of the best known members of the orchestra how they could manage to keep together under such a beat; he looked pained for a moment, hesitated and then replied, "We do the best we can, if a passage is marked *presto*, then we play it *presto*, if

it is marked *moderato*, we play it *moderato*—as I said before, we do the best we can."

DO NOT.

Having now "surveyed mankind from China to Peru," I would say finally :

Do not undertake the position of conductor unless you have an abundance of patience.

Do not lose your temper.

Do not be sarcastic.

Do not go on to the end of a piece before correcting errors, but stop, make your remarks in very few words, and go on at once before "the scent gets cold." If you wait, you will forget half the blunders, and fail to explain the others.

Do not make long speeches.

Do not repeat your words to impress them ; they are more likely to confuse.

Do not be afraid of using your metronome before starting a piece at rehearsal.

Do not be ashamed of consulting your "Dictionary of Musical Terms" if you come across a word you do not understand.

Do not come to rehearsal wondering what you are going to do, but have all arrangements made beforehand, so that not five minutes shall be wasted out of the short time given to practice,

Do not conduct with a rotary beat, as though you were stirring a pudding.

Do not switch your baton as though you were cracking a whip.

Do not use a black or dark-coloured baton, it cannot be seen so well as a white one.

Do not "dance to the music," or use excessive action or gesture.

Do not go to the other extreme, and study the deportment of the railway signal post.. Be as natural as you possibly can, without fuss or affectation.

Do not fail to watch every conductor you can and learn something from him.

Lastly, do not think that all eyes are upon you : you will feel embarrassed.

I have been looking forward to the time when Art shall be divorced from personal considerations; when a conductor will be so hidden by shrubs, flowers or other screen, that his movements shall not distract the attention, and perhaps offend the eyes of the audience, but that is not yet.

" Young men see visions, and old men dream dreams."

The saying is attributed to Michael Angelo that:

" Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle."

The Organising and Conducting of Amateur Orchestras.

The substance of an address delivered at the Midland Convention of Choirmasters and Music Teachers, held in the Large Lecture Theatre of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, on September 19, 1901, the Lord Mayor of Birmingham in the chair.

IN common with thousands of music lovers, I very much regret the decay of orchestral playing in consequence of the introduction of keyboard instruments. It is quite certain that organs have driven orchestral players from the churches in the villages and towns, who in former times brightened local life by the enjoyment of instrumental music.

Village music has been reduced to a concertina or a banjo in many places.

The organ has come to stay, it has brought dignity and simplicity into the services, but there is no reason why every other musical instrument should be dis-

couraged and banished from our churches and chapels. Quite recently it was held an act of sacrilege, by some good folks, to introduce stringed instruments into a place of worship. In the year 1900 I was consulted by an organist as to how he could organise a band of players for a special service, one difficulty being that those persons forming the band had to be sunk to a lower level and behind the choir, because "it would not do for them to be seen, the congregation would not like it." A few years ago a few brass instruments were allowed to be mixed up with the choir at St. Paul's Cathedral, when the choir was a very large one, or had to walk in procession, to steady the voices and firmly mark time. Even that was objected to by some purists! At the present time a full orchestra is employed on great occasions.

What short memories some of us have to be sure! How long is it since all church singing was led by strings and wind instruments? My maternal grandfather played the bass viol in the choir of Wesley's Chapel, City Road. I once had his instrument, but unfortunately parted with it. Before organs were so numerous other instruments were in use, and I can see no reason why all available means, that are pure in themselves, may not be used in our public worship. If our grandparents were not scandalised by such, why should we be?

There are now many orchestras formed for other than church work, and I am glad to believe that more will yet be established, for the love of music and without any thought of pecuniary gain.

In my remarks it will be evident that the difficulty is not so much how to form an orchestra, as it is how to keep one in good working order when you have got it. The thought "how to destroy an orchestra" will be lurking in the background of all that I may have to say to you. The neglect of small things is fatal to such an organisation and will surely sap the life out of it if not carefully studied. How few orchestras there are that have lived a reasonably long life!

When I was asked to address you upon the subject of forming an orchestra my first thought was that it would be a very simple matter, thus: first procure a large bag of money, so large that it would require the use of both your hands to lift it. Then engage the best orchestral players that Birmingham London and Manchester could furnish you with, call one rehearsal, exhaust your men, give your concert and, having put together the proceeds, it is very likely that you would be able to carry that bag home again quite easily in *one* hand. But I have been told that I must talk about amateur orchestras. That is a far more difficult task in every way. In

the first place you do not begin with a large bag of money! You will have to make personal application to the instrumentalists of your acquaintance, you will advertise in the newspapers, you will issue circulars; these are useful aids, but there is nothing like the human presence to bring about you the best available players. The strength of a chain is said to be in its weakest link, but the strength of an orchestra is in the best players that you can find. You must begin at the top. I am not proposing that you should start with a violin class. An orchestra is an entirely different organisation. You want a certain number of first violins to sit on your left, seconds on your right, violas, 'cellos, double-basses, and wind instruments of all sorts. You will have twenty or thirty staves to your score, and will have to find players for all these respective parts.

Assuming that you have procured your players, you have to make very great consideration for the position in which you place them. Orchestral players are not in any sense to be compared to members of choirs, I am an old singer and choirmaster and know the difference of the environment. An instrumentalist is an enthusiast first. He spends pounds upon his instrument, say, a flute, costing perhaps thirty pounds. Violins can be bought from two shillings and sixpence to two thousand guineas. You little

think of the value of the instruments alone which are before you in an orchestra at a concert. The instruments of a first-class professional orchestra may cost £1,500 to £2,000. Your instrumentalists have paid a great deal of money for their tuition, and have put in an enormous amount of private practice to qualify for membership, therefore I have great respect for the personality of the orchestra. The number of instrumentalists upon whom you may call is very limited. I have been secretary and treasurer of a large society which has ample funds, so I do not ask the players to pay subscriptions, but you must "cut your coat according to your cloth." You may have governors, ministers or deacons who are ready to pay all the expenses that you will incur; you may have, I do not assert that such is the case.

In a great number of orchestras ladies are excluded, that is a serious mistake, lady players are very useful in an orchestra. Some may say that they get more masculine vigour from the men, but I think we do not always want that, what we require is chaste, refined playing, and you can always get that from the ladies. In fact, the violin is fast becoming the ladies' instrument. At a recent concert given by the Royal Academy of Music, I noticed that out of thirty-eight violinists only seven were "mere men." If men now think they are being cut out by the ladies

there is plenty of room yet for them at the double bass and in the wood-wind and brass departments.

I say to all the second violins, who mostly want to play first, that it needs a better reader to correctly play an inner part than an outer one. It is far easier to play a melody than to correctly fill up the harmonies, so I say keep some of your best violinists for the second side.

Viola players are very scarce, this should not be the case, it is a very interesting instrument and gives a good insight into the construction of compositions, it is an instrument suitable for those whose love of music is more than "skin deep." It is a little larger, so some object to the stretch of the fingers, some will say "but it does not play the tune." The first objection is not a sound one and the second is not made by a true lover of music for its own sake. The alto clef, from which it is played, is a little trouble at first, but then in music difficulties are given us that we may overcome them, not that they may beat us.

I have lately taken a tour of our large teaching establishments, and find that at the Guildhall School of Music, there are between four hundred and five hundred students for the violin, and only about ten for the viola. At the Royal Academy of Music free tuition was offered to a viola player, but there was not one applicant for it. At the Royal College of

Music a viola scholarship was vacant, with free tuition and possible maintenance also, but there was not one candidate for it! It is a shame (hear, hear). See to it that these scholarships do not go begging. There are solos for the instrument. You must have it in the quartet and in the orchestra. Get some of your promising young violinists to take up the instrument. If there should be one more viola player in the land after these few remarks of mine, the fact will justify my visit to Birmingham.

There are numbers of men who would take up the double bass if you would provide the instrument. If you are forming an orchestra, purchase an instrument, two would be better. Buy four-stringed basses by preference, those with three strings are useful, but four strings are better. If you have a man who says he really cannot play upon a four-stringed one, let one string down off the bridge and he then has three.

Now as to wind instruments. One piccolo goes a long way. It is so easily overblown.

Sometimes the second flute player, to make his part sound out, will play it upon his piccolo for a change, but in so doing he inverts a part that was, say, a third below the first flute to one a sixth above it; that will not do, you must restrain zeal of that sort.

Sir Frederick Bridge has said, in his witty way,

"the piccolo has come to stay for good—or bad!" Such a remark is justified by the way some piccolo players labour their part upon an instrument of piercing tone.

Flute players are as plentiful as ripe blackberries.

An amateur oboe player may produce a "quacky" tone; it is an extremely delicate instrument, and must be of good quality. Hold your instrument up to the light, and it should be as bright inside as a looking-glass, if it is not, it will not give a good tone. The oboe part can be played upon the flute when necessary, in the absence of the former instrument.

Two clarinets are wanted, and two bassoons; they are rare, especially the latter. In the old days every man who played at all played the bassoon, unless it were the 'cello. If you have not got a bassoon you must certainly put a 'cello or a euphonium down to the part, either can play it.

It is related of a certain generous individual who had no knowledge of matters musical, that being asked to present an instrument for the use of the band in the village church, the next time he went to town he called at the music shop and asked what would be the most suitable, the dealer after pondering, suggested a bassoon. The generous one then said, "All right, send a dozen of 'em."

Then we come to the brass. French horns are

nearly impracticable for amateur orchestras; they are so extremely difficult to understand. The horn part is transposed on paper, and then the player transposes it again on his instrument, so you must invariably have professional horn players. There are amateurs, of course, but they are very few.

Trumpet parts are commonly played upon cornets. I do not like to hear the cornet in orchestral work, although it is a very beautiful instrument in a military band. Persuade a young fellow to get a modern valve trumpet, the tone is quite different, being much brighter.

Trombone players may be found, you will want alto (E flat), tenor (B flat) and bass (G) instruments, but the alto is very scarce.

In France they use two tenor and one bass, but it requires a very good player to get the high notes necessary to play the alto part.

When conducting you must wait while the tympani player tunes his drums, as they require to be re-tuned for each movement where a change of key occurs, if you start before he is ready he cannot play his part. The tympani should be struck a hand's length, or hereabouts, from the rim, it is there that a definite note is produced: if struck near the middle of the head a dull "tubby" tone is the result. As to the cymbals, the less said about them the better. I know

many a hall in which the music is ruined by the cymbals and bass drum, they are excellent means of discovering an echo, which, of course, comes after the beat. I generally, where possible, leave them out.

We will suppose that you have got all the needful instruments, you then proceed to arrange your forces in proper order.

A most vital thing is attention to the desks, a detail commonly neglected, as in nine cases out of ten they are much too high. I do not know of anything which more readily leads to the unconscious discontent of players than this little matter, it is a sure means of killing an orchestra. Any porter can put out the desks, but then he will probably place them all in straight rows, the result being that one player at each desk will have the conductor on one side and his music on the other, so that he will look steadfastly at the music and not see the conductor at all, he will follow the rhythm by ear and spoil any *rallentando* or pause that may occur, besides being constantly a little off the beat.

The conductor should be in the centre of a semi-circle. All the desks should radiate from him, so that he and they can see eye to eye. When I go to my desk I look for eyes, if they are below the top of the desk I have it lowered, if they are looking another way the desk must be shifted. It is quite

impossible for amateurs to play well together unless they pay strict attention to the beat.

A gentleman recently wrote to the "Times" complaining that the members of the Philharmonic Orchestra seldom or never looked up at the conductor. Had he been an orchestral player he would have known that it is quite unnecessary to do so if you see him all the time! A good man knows when the conductor wants to stop by his expression, he watches all the gestures and follows them, as well as the baton, the music on the desk should, as far as possible, be in a direct line between them. Many of us in these degenerate times, wear glasses. Now it is impossible in such cases to see both the music and the conductor *through* the glasses. The desks should be low enough to look over the top of them, the focal length will not enable one to see at two different distances through the lenses. It therefore frequently happens that a really valuable helper gets disgusted with himself and you, because he is being constantly pulled up and made to look silly before his juniors simply because he cannot see properly, owing to a bad arrangement of his desk or the light. I have myself suffered great inconvenience from this cause. On one occasion three of us had to use one desk, each of us having separate copies to play from, opening to two pages each, six pages open at one time on one desk,

and that so high that we could not see the conductor at all. This sort of experience causes one to avoid that orchestra another time. An enthusiast who is of value in an orchestra is worth keeping, and it is only by making him comfortable, so that he enjoys coming to your meeting, that you will induce him to leave his home or other engagements to join your orchestra. To slide away is so easy. If one really enjoys a certain evening in the week given up to your orchestra, then no other engagement will be accepted for that night, but if one is not quite happy about it, then it is so easy to make any other arrangement for that night if anything arises; and so a steadfast friend becomes careless about his attendance and neglects your orchestra, because he thinks it does not matter much whether he is there or not.

There are no general principles concerning the organisation of an orchestra, which may be stated in a brief definite way, it is all detail.

Having arranged your desks, you next come to the choice of music.

There is a great quantity of vile rubbish now upon the market, but you can get the best music in the world for a moderate price, or you can hire a great deal of it for a trifling sum.

The best music is not of necessity the most difficult, any more than the best songs are the most florid.

Take care to provide only that which is good, and give your best players solos from time to time. This will improve or maintain the status of your band.

Some people say that you should not have a pianoforte in an orchestra, but when you have an incomplete one you should have the pianoforte, and it can play the harp part, if there is one. I had recently to conduct a rehearsal of Schubert's "Unfinished" symphony without any wind instruments, all the strings frequently playing accompaniment only, how could it be kept going and made interesting to the players without the pianoforte? To play with an incomplete orchestra is very dry work. A harmonium can fill in wind parts if necessary.

You will want a secretary, he will get the kicks. The treasurer will be expected to make bricks without straw. The librarian is a very important officer and should be a thoroughly reliable man.

I have sometimes been to a rehearsal where the conductor has arrived a quarter of an hour late. Nobody knew what we were going to play. Nothing was got out and half our time wasted in distributing parts. The best way is to put all that you are going to play into wrappers or portfolios before the hour of rehearsal, and so have everything ready. If you cannot afford handsome portfolios use half a sheet of brown paper, it serves the purpose just as well,

but take care that it is used and ready before your people arrive.

Tuning is most important. It is the life-blood of the concern. It is like having blood-poisoning to have an orchestra badly tuned !

A friend of mine, who was an ardent mountaineer, used to say that to successfully climb the Alps you should "breakfast early and breakfast often." I might say the same of tuning an amateur band. Stringed instruments that are not in constant use quickly get out of tune when played upon, and need frequent readjustment during the earlier part of the evening, the rising temperature of the room flattening the gut strings and sharpening the covered ones.

Grattan Cooke, a famous oboe player of about sixty years ago, being a man of eminence in his profession, was always asked to give the A. The oboe does so to this day, but it is frequently very sharp, it depends upon its reed, and many players make their own. Sometimes violinists have to stretch their strings to breaking point to reach the pitch given. It is better to tune to a fork of standard pitch, or a pianoforte. With regard to tuning to an organ, that is a serious matter, as some organists extemporise in A major, thus giving out C sharp and G sharp, while the strings have to tune C and G against them. D minor is better as you get naturals. An organist

who is accustomed to a band, quietly holds the A down while the tuning goes on, but some do not, as we know to our cost. I remember an organist, at a concert, putting on all the organ he could. Our tuning was quite impossible, some shouted, but in vain! At length the conductor came to the desk and rapped several times, but to no result. At last a messenger had to be sent up to the organist to stop him. When the concert began we had the same experience, and from first to last that instrument simply swamped everything, choir and orchestra alike, nothing was heard but organ tone. Organists should remember not to use reeds or mixtures when playing with a band, as they kill the tone of the strings.

One inducement to good players to join your forces is offered when you print their names upon the programmes, this is done in all good orchestras.

Punctuality I need hardly discuss, because we all know that that is a delicate question, and always refers to "the other man" who is outside this room. The conductor who comes late may be certain that others will do the same. It is best to commence your rehearsal even if only a few players are present. Another serious aspect of unpunctuality is that those who come late have no time to tune their instruments.

As to tuning the double bass, men often scrape away on the lower strings and cannot hear the sound

properly, they saw up and down as well as across. The bow must go as straight as possible, if it goes up and down the strings it checks the vibrations and gives a rumbling sound. It is best to tune by the harmonic. To those of you who may not be acquainted with stringed instruments I should explain that a "harmonic" note is produced by lightly touching the string with the tip of the finger, not pressing it upon the fingerboard. If the string is touched in the middle, a note an octave higher than the open string is obtained, or if at the quarter length then one two octaves above the open note. Thus a clearer sound is obtained than can be got out of the heavy lower strings of the double bass when played open, while the other members of the orchestra are probably making as much noise as they possibly can. The unnecessary amount of noise so made is a rather curious fact, as better results can be obtained when moderation prevails.

There is a story told of an amateur bass player who used to play under Sir Michael Costa in the old Sacred Harmonic Society. He had been filing away at his instrument, and just as Costa approached his desk a professional who played with the amateur said, "I do not think you are quite in tune *now*." To which the amateur replied, having pressed his fin-

gers down hard upon the strings, "Oh, I never make them any tighter than that."

A very valuable experience for an amateur orchestra is to play accompaniments to vocal or instrumental solos, they learn by that means what they never would otherwise realise, namely, how to wait. It is the soloist who sets the *tempo*, or should do, while the conductor follows the principal and the orchestra takes its beat from the conductor.

Unfortunately, some vocalists are not exact in their methods, and take so many liberties with a song that it becomes exceedingly difficult to follow them. They often will turn a crotchet rest into a minim rest, and so get five beats into a bar instead of four, or they will hurry it up unexpectedly and put only three beats in instead of four.

Then your friend, the critic, who sits in front will tell you that your band went "all wrong" somewhere, or another friend, just as critical, but more cautious, will ask, "What was the matter with the band?" being quite unconscious of the fact that the vocalist was at fault, in breaking up the work in an unreasonable way.

Personally I do not care how much they vary the *tempo* of a piece of music, so long as they keep to the rhythm. In many cases, the possessor of a fine natural voice makes a public success without having

sufficiently mastered the art of music, as apart from the art of singing. When playing accompaniments everybody is counting and all have rests at times, so if the vocalist takes great liberties it will certainly throw out the band. The conductor must be absolutely sure of his beat and give a clear down beat on the first of each bar.

I knew an organist who engaged a lady vocalist for a recital. She sang her first song in such a way that he determined to show her, in her next, how it should be sung, and in spite of her efforts to go her own way, he literally dragged her through it "by the ears." There was a scene afterwards, a description of which I will spare you.

You will sometimes see a conductor beating circles or ovals; it is quite impossible to play well together under such a beat. I have said that members of orchestras have to count long rests. On one occasion I found that I had to count 227 bars and then come in on the right beat of the right bar. Think of trying to do that under an erratic beat, with very possibly some changes of *tempo* during the rest!

Of all English conductors, Sir F. H. Cowen is the one I admire most, whatever he does is right, whatever he omits to do you also may omit to do, at least that is the measure of my faith in him.

As to other conductors, there are many really great

authorities, to watch whom, is in itself, a "liberal education" in conducting, but on the other hand there are many funny little ways that some of them have, like that one who the other day told the double bass player, who had an awkward turn over, not to stop playing, but hold on to the open C string with the bow and turn over with his left hand. The point here is that there is not an open C on the instrument, except on those very rare ones with five strings. Many things arise to amuse and to caution budding conductors, not the least being want of foresight in making proper provision for the band and yet expecting to get good results without taking the trouble to make them possible.

Hector Berlioz, in his autobiography, tells the story of a rehearsal that was so badly managed, that a performance of his "Symphonie Fantastique," which he was very anxious should be given, had to be abandoned. He wrote: "And thus my plan fell to the ground for the want of a few stools and desks. . . . Since then I have taken the utmost pains about the material of my concerts, having fully realised the disasters which ensue from neglect of them."

I was once asked to play in an orchestra before an audience numbering many thousands of people. I arrived at my position in good time, there were the tympani, but there were no sticks, no desk, no music!

In a hurry four sheets of MS. were procured and handed to me, one of which had no title. Now it is a little difficult to identify a drum part without a title. The desk I never got, so had to use my pocket knife against a post.

The conductor beat the bar fairly and squarely until he came to a *rallentando*, then he omitted the first beat after a pause and came down, whack! on what he considered the second, but which was, to the players really his first of the bar; the result being that the poor drummer who had an important entry there, was made to look stupid in the eyes of the critics who sat in front, and who thought him a duffer. Whenever I am asked to play in that band, it is a singular coincidence, but it happens, I remember a previous engagement! I mention this small matter, that conductors may be induced to beat the whole bar, and not a portion only, when conducting an orchestra, and not to run the risk of failure by want of adequate provision for what they require to be done: this is my reason for mentioning this small matter here.

Another conductor, a most estimable man, beloved by all who knew him, eloquent and learned, full of valuable information and always ready to bestow it; has a strange habit of hovering, baton in air, before starting, and when everybody is quite ready, the

brass players all with their notes in their heads; for you know that on a brass instrument you must "think" your note before you can produce it; he proceeds to tell us how, when or why the work we are about to play was composed, what some eminent critic said about it, or some other information both interesting and instructive, but which is mostly thrown away because it is not a favourable moment, and when after the long wait we start, some have lost their bearings and plunge on the wrong note, the result being that another start has to be made. The moral of this little incident being, that while information is valuable and desirable there is a proper time and place for it.

The old maxim that "Speech is silvern, silence is golden," does not mean that we are always to be silent, but that there is a proper time for most things. We should be thankful for all the instruction given, but the time must be favourable.

An orchestra attached to a Choral Society should not be kept slaving away always at the accompaniments to a work without either chorus or principals. It is not fair to the players, and kills their enthusiasm. A standard work, such as a Haydn or other Symphony should always be at hand to encourage your people.

Now to recapitulate. First catch your players,

treat them with generosity, always have a vocalist at your rehearsals, or two to sing a duet, this is a splendid training for both band and singers. Have a pianoforte, put the names of your players on the programmes, treat your people with all the respect they deserve and do not be too sarcastic.

It is better to have the orchestra complete by giving engagements to professionals and a small fee for attending rehearsals, as playing with an incomplete band is very unsatisfactory work.

The great requisite for the conductor, apart from his musical skill, is what has been called "the divine gift of tact." That is what the orchestral organiser most needs.

There are two other wise sayings that exactly fit the case. "Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart."

Michael Angelo spent a lot of time in finishing the fine details of a big work of art, and people said to him "these things are trifles"; he replied that "trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle." Lastly let me remind you of the definition of genius, attributed to Dr. Johnson, when he said that "Genius is the capacity for taking infinite pains."

In reply to discussion:—I quite agree with the remarks that have been made, both as to the marking of cuts by those who have previously borrowed the

music and have not been kind enough to remove them, thus causing a great deal of trouble to those who follow them; and as to string players sounding their open strings (to tune) immediately after playing a piece in a key unrelated. It is a fault that should be checked. Imagine a choir asking for the chord to be given on the piano to tell the audience if they had flattened! The effect would be just as painful.

I do not think there is any scarcity of good music for an orchestra.

As to the need of soft playing from amateur wind, cheap foreign instruments are sometimes the cause of coarse tone. Often wind instruments are slightly out of tune at the ends of their compass, if in tune at the bottom then they may be out at the top, or vice versa: the harmonics being difficult to manage. The insides of the tubes should be very smooth and perfect, or the results are bad.

I do not agree with one speaker as to "Sol-faing" the horn part, as players prefer to use the F crook, and so have a fixed standard of value in their mind. Composers often make great mistakes in writing for that awkward instrument; clarinet music transposed is not horn music!

One speaker misunderstood what I said about church orchestras. I once felt personally aggrieved

on being asked to sell, or assist in selling, a set of instruments that had been in use in a church for generations. The object of the sale being to raise funds with which to purchase an American organ. All the players being turned out and instrumental music abolished, to make way for one instrument and one performer only. It was thus that our village musicians, and town ones, too, were killed off in the past, but we hope now for a revival of interest in that direction, and I shall always be very glad to render any advice or assistance that I can, to any young conductor who may be desirous of forming an orchestra.

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